593 servants is set aside at the expense of the tara-
342 vad to entertain these men when they visit their wives, sometimes for two or three days at a time.

351 The buildings and courtyard are surrounded
•515 by a shady garden of coconut, jackfruit, cashew
[343] nut and mango trees. Chiefs and village headmen have a private bathing pool with stone steps running round it in their own garden; retainer [56] Nayars more often bathe in the large public bathing pools attached to the temples and reserved for "clean" castes of the village. Men and women bathe and swim daily in public clad in a loin-cloth, on opposite sides of the pool.
[526] Both boys and girls become excellent swimmers and divers almost as soon as they can walk.

351 In the southeast corner of the garden is an
[764] open space set aside as the group's cremation
[778] ground, while at another corner is a dense shrubbery devoted to the snake-gods of the group, in which small stone images of cobras are set up.

421 The property-group was traditionally a cor-
592 porate group in other sense than those in which
672 this term applied to the lineage. Whereas the lineage was held responsible in cases of offence against religious law (sins, or crimes against the village community), the property-group was responsible in cases of debt or theft (torts). The headman, on behalf of the group, must make restitution for such offences from the group's jointly owned funds. In addition, as representative of the group in the assembly, he must pay annual dues to the temple funds. Through its headman, the group also acted as a single legal personality in the payment of wages to its

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342 tertaining friends, or sleeping when they were not visiting their wives. [343] A cowshed a few yards from the residential buildings completed the arrangements in a normal retainer homestead. In village headmen's 342 and chiefly households whose women often had Brahman husbands 556 a separate building with its own kitchen was set aside to entertain the men when they visited their wives.

[351] The buildings and outer courtyard were surrounded by a shady garden of coconut, jack, cashew, and mango trees. Chiefs and village [312] headmen had a private bathing pool with stone steps round it in their own gardens. Retainers more often bathed in the large public bathing [515] pools attached to the temples and reserved for "clean" castes of the village. Men and women bathed and swam daily on opposite sides of the pool.

351 In the southwest corner of the garden an open space was set aside 613 as the property group's cremation ground, entered only at funerals. [764] In another corner was a dense shrubbery devoted to the snake gods [776] of the group. Offerings were made there to small stone images of [787] cobras, and if real cobras appeared they were regarded as manifesta- [825] tions of these deities.

A high bamboo fence surrounded the whole establishment. It was entered through a wooden gatehouse within which armed men might 592 sit on guard in time of war.

241 *Economic Activities* The property group obtained almost all of its subsistence from garden and paddy lands held on tenure from the 427 village landlord and cultivated by Tiyyar sub-tenants or by Pulaya 613 serfs. The property group surrendered part of its produce in kind as 433 dues to the landlord. It retained part for maintenance, stored part for repayment to its serfs as daily subsistence, and gave portions twice annually to the village servant households. Tiyyar tenants retained enough for their own needs, but gave the bulk of their produce to their Nayar masters. Increasingly during the period of European trade [439] the property group also sold spices and coconuts to Muslim middle- [432] men in exchange for cash or cloth. The cash was used to buy brass [431] and silver vessels, gold ornaments and jewelry, and other luxury goods from the towns. The property group gave some cloth to its serfs and tenants at festivals once a year.

613 The kāranavan managed all these transactions and controlled the 592 group's estate. He might allocate specific tasks of management to [465] juniors, but no payment was made on behalf of the group, no crops were sold, and no goods were consumed without his consent. Junior men serving in the king's wars received small daily cash sums on an

Nâyar women of all classes shave the hair about the vagina. They shave themselves, standing, placing one foot on a bench or anything a couple of feet or so from the ground, thus raising the leg. The use of scissors for this purpose is rare, new fangled and not sanctified by custom. In a few houses now-a-days razors of English or German manufacture are kept for the use of the women; but according to general custom the barber woman pays periodical visits, and the women of the house receive from her a razor, with which they shave themselves. The armpits, the eyebrows and stray hairs on any other part of the body, excepting of course the head, are shaved by the barber woman. I have it an excellent authority that some of the elderly women—possibly those who are old and fleshy—submit their entire person to the barber woman's razor. The young women never.

In the Tamil country the women, as is well known, use a depilatory. Possibly the Nâyar women resort to shaving in order to avoid the unpleasant odour of the depilatory. The reason for shaving or destroying the hair on that part of the body is not apparent. No reason is assigned for it. Very likely the custom arose out of necessities for cleanliness, when the Nâyars were not the clean people they are now, and like all customs has persisted aimlessly.

Colour of the skin.—Using Broca's colour tables. The darkest was as No. 43 (one only); the fairest, 44 to 30. Two others were fair or very nearly so. The colour number for 5 was 37; for 5 was 28; for 13 was 29, and lighter. Darker than the Nambûtiri. The women, who are not so much exposed to the sun, are distinctly fair as well as well favoured. Many are very handsome.

Colour of the eyes.—Out of 20 individuals (using Broca's colour tables for the eyes), in 13 the number corresponding to their eyes was 2, while in 7 it was 1 to a little lighter. So that the eye is, as a rule, brown; rarely black.

Ornaments, men.—Not much jewellery is worn. One or two golden earrings called kadukkans are worn, as a rule, in each ear by those who can afford to do so. Some of the members of this clan who call themselves "Paḍi-nâyirattil"—"one of 10,000"—doubtless a relic of the old Nâyar military system, pierce the ears, but never wear earrings. The title of the hereditary chief of these is Ayyâyira Prabhu Karttâvu. The 10,000 do not, however, all belong to this clan. I came across a man of the Nambiyâr clan who belonged to it, and he too could not wear earrings. Rings and amulets are also worn commonly.

One individual wore 2 golden earrings, of the pattern called kadukkan in each ear.

One individual wore two rings made of an amalgam of gold and copper, called "tambâk" in the vernacular, on the ring finger of the right hand, for good luck. "Tambâk" rings are lucky rings. It is a good thing to

564
301 wash the face with the hand on which is a "tambâk"
[515] ring. I see in my notes a record of an individual who
wore one of these rings on the second finger of the left
[789] hand. They are common.

One individual wore two rings of the pattern called triloham (lit: metals) on the ring finger of each hand. Each of these rings was made during an eclipse!

[782] One individual wore a silver bangle as a vow. It was to be given up at the next festival to be held at a place called Kottiôre, a famous festival in North Malabar, the scene of it being far away in the forest under the hills. He also wore a "tambâk" ring on the ring finger of the right hand for luck; and a thin iron ring on the ring finger of the left hand.

[304] One individual wore no jewellery, but there was a small circular tattooed spot in the centre of the forehead over the glabella. Tattooing is not common. This individual is the only one of those examined who was tattooed.

Women.—The style of the jewellery worn by the women will be seen in the *plate*. It is altogether unlike
[171] any other South Indian jewellery. The necklaces are almost identical in form, shape and general character with those of Sindh. Silver is never worn.

[304] The lobes of the ears are dilated in childhood generally in the sixth month and in them are worn large spiral rings of white metal or the more solid "tôda," really a handsome ornament, in the groove of which the elongated ear-lobe is almost concealed. It is made of gold. Properly speaking the tôda is an ornament worn exclusively by the Nâyar women. Several necklaces are often worn at the same time. The Venetian sequin,
301 which probably first found its way hither in the days of
177 Vasco da Gama and Albuquerque, is one of those coins
364 which, having found favour with a people, is used persistently in ornamentation long after it has passed out of currency; thus illustrating the well-known thesis that things originally made for use, by and by pass into ornament. There are instances of this use of coins in Europe, of course, as amongst the Swabian peasantry. So fond are the Malayalis—those of Malabar, Cochin and Travancore—of the sequin that to this day there is quite a large trade in imitations of the coin for purposes of ornament. Such is the persistence of its use that the trade extends to brass and even copper imitations of the sequin. The former, brought from Europe, are often seen to bear the

1/1 [see plate I, facing p. 220 -- An.]

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142 *Colour of the skin* (*Broca's colour types*).—The fairest
*564 was No. 40 (one only); and the two next fairest were 30 to 44 and 39 to 44. The darkest was 43. The average seems to be a little darker than 29 but not so dark as 28. Darker than the Kiriyattil.

Colour of the eyes (Broca).—The colour of the eyes of half the number was as No. 1, and that of the other half as No. 2. One exception was between Nos. 1 and 10. The average therefore is a dark brown; not black.

*301 *Ornaments.*—Ears pierced, and the usual earrings
564 (kadukkans) worn by those who can afford them. In one
[304] case the earrings were set with a red stone. The ornaments or adornments of various individuals were as follows:—

(1) Bell metal ring on the ring finger of right hand.

(2) Two brass rings on ring finger of right hand. A string of wool thrice round the right wrist to keep off fever at night.

(3) Tattooed circular mark over glabella. The operator was a woman of the Chetti caste, a travelling tattooer, and the cost of the operation 2 pies.

[515] (4) One gold kadukkan in each ear. Two copper
[789] rings on ring finger of right hand. Washing the face with a hand wearing a copper ring removes black spots on the face, and prevents them coming. So said the wearer.

(5) Two amulets, silver cylindrical cases containing mantrams, worn on a string round the waist to keep off fever and devils. Amulet cases are often worn on the
163 waist in the way of ornament pure and simple.
*564 *Prolificness.*—In 12 families the children born were 29 males and 34 females, or an average of 5·2 children to each family.

141 The average weight of 4 individuals was 119½ lb.

The names of some of those examined.

Taravâd.	Name.	Occupation.	Age.
551 Blathâdi	Govindan	Cultivator	40
*564 Râvâri Chandil ...	Kêlu	Do.	22
Palôli	Kunju	Do.	25
463 Murikolipôil ...	Shangaran	Trader	21
115 Kuttadath ...	Krishnan	Writer	20
Thaikandi ...	Appu	Cooly	26
Thazhathadathil ...	Châthu	Do.	24
Eraṅkulangara ...	Kittan	Milk seller	25
Vêlashêri	Cherukoman	Cultivator	40
Chêlattumal ...	Kunhunni	Cooly	44
Patavetti	Châthukutti	Cultivator	62

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the couch on which the Nâyar has his oil bath. The surface of it is sloping, the higher end being where the head is laid, and it is scooped out so as to suit the curvatures of the body lying flat.* Lying on her back, her head is raised and the thighs are stretched wide apart. Very often she holds in each hand a rope suspended from the ceiling, by way of support. The child is received by a woman of the barber caste."

DEATH AND SUCCEEDING CEREMONIES.

When the dying person is about to embark for that bourne from which no traveller returns, when the breath is about to leave his body, the members of the household, and all friends who may be present, one by one pour a little water, a few drops from a tiny cup made of a leaf or two of the tulsi plant, into his mouth, holding in the hand a piece of gold or a gold ring; the idea being that the water should touch gold ere it enters the mouth of the person who is dying. If the Taravâd is rich enough to afford it, a small gold coin, (a Râsi fanam, if one can be procured †) is placed in the mouth, and the lips are closed. As soon as death has taken place, the corpse is removed from the cot or bed, and carried to the vatakkini (a room in the northern end of the house) where it is placed on long plantain leaves spread out on the floor; and while it is in this room, whether by day or by night, a lamp is kept burning, and one member of the Taravâd holds the head in his lap and another the feet in the same way; and here the neighbours come to take a farewell look at the dead.

As the Malayâlis believe that disposal of a corpse by cremation or burial as soon as possible after death is conducive to the happiness of the spirit of the departed, no time is lost in setting about the funeral. The bodies of senior members of a Taravâd, male or female, are burned; those of children under two are buried; so too are the bodies of all persons who have died of cholera or small-pox.‡ When preparations for the funeral have been made, the corpse is removed to the natumuttam or central yard of the house if there is one (there always is

* Every Nâyar, and for the matter of that, every Malayali, has an oil bath about once a week or as often as he can afford. The person is well shampooed with gingelly oil.

† These are now rare.

‡ It is the same amongst the Khonds of Ganjam.

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long key. This individual is throughout *chief* among the offerers of "pindam" (balls of rice) to the deceased.

The corpse is laid on the bier, with the head to the south, with the fuel laid over it and a little camphor, sandalwood and ghee, if these things are within the means of the Taravâd. Here must be stated the invariable rule that no member of the Taravâd, male or female, who is older than the deceased shall take any part whatever in the ceremony, or in any subsequent ceremony following on the cremation or burial. All adult males junior to the deceased should be present when the pyre is lighted. The deceased's younger brother, or, if there is none surviving, his nephew (his sister's eldest son), sets fire to the pyre at the head of the corpse. If the deceased left a son, this son sets fire at the same time to the pyre at the feet of the corpse. In the case of the deceased being a woman, her son sets fire to the pyre; failing a son the next (junior) in age to her has the right to do it. It is a matter of great importance that the whole pyre burns at once: the greatest care is taken that it burns as a whole, consuming every part of the corpse. While the corpse is being consumed, all the members of the deceased's Taravâd who carried it to the pyre go and bathe in a tank (there is always one in the compound or garden around every Nâyar's house): the eldest, he who bears the piece of torn cloth and the piece of iron (the key), carries an earthen pot of water, and all return together to the place of cremation. It should be said that on the news of a death the neighbours assemble, assisting in digging the grave, preparing the pyre, and so on, and, while the members of the Taravâd go and bathe, those remain near the corpse. By the time the relatives return it is almost consumed by the fire, and the senior Anandravan carries the pot of water thrice round the pyre, letting the water leak out by making holes in the pot as he walks round. On completing the third round, he dashes the pot on the ground close by where the head of the dead had been placed. A small image of the deceased is then made out of raw rice * representing the deceased, and to this image a few grains of rice and gingelly seeds are offered. When this has been done the relatives go home and the neighbours depart, bathing before entering their houses.

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* The ceremony is called Veli Unka (?).

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RELIGION.

It will be easier to convey a rational conception of the religion of the Nâyars, not by what is written but by what is left out; so we will proceed on this plan. The ceremonies connected with marriage and death go far towards indicating what are their religious ideas in general. The conservative character of the people of Malabar whose country is an earthly paradise, severed from the major portion of the Indian peninsula by the high mountains of the Western Ghâts, secure in its happy seclusion, where Nature has lavished her gifts with the prodigality of a Bacchante, prepares us for finding much of the primitive element in their religion. With the more uncultivated, the wilder races, this is almost entirely primitive in character; no more the cult of a Siva or Vishnu than of Sqaktktquaclt.

As has been remarked already ("Nambûtiris" Bulletin, Vol. III, No. I), we see in Malabar the most undiluted form of the highest, the most abstract religion of Southern India, side by side with the most entirely primitive. The Nâyars have much of both.

The saying, "cleanliness is next to godliness," is one of those which contain much more real wisdom than is usually apprehended. The world is really divided, as I think Mr. Havelock Ellis points out, between the dirty and the clean; and, if I err not, the same author tells us that clothed man cannot be truly clean. Man has advanced far in development when he has become a clean animal. Now the Nâyars' religion is one of cleanliness, undiminished by superabundant clothing. Men and women can scarcely wear less than they do in compatibility with the received ideas of decency and propriety, nor can they be more scrupulous in the matter of personal cleanliness. No Nâyar, unless one utterly degraded by the exigencies of a Government office, would eat his food without having bathed and changed his cloth. It is a rule seldom broken that every Nâyar goes to the temple to pray at least once a day after having bathed; generally twice a day. The mere approach anywhere near his vicinity of a Cheruman, a Polayan or any inferior being, even a Tîyan, as he walks to his house from the temple, cleansed in body and mind, his marks newly set on his forehead with sandalwood paste, is pollution, and he must turn and bathe again ere he can enter his house and eat. Buchanan tells us that in his time, about 99 years ago, the man of inferior caste thus approaching

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PL. XIV.

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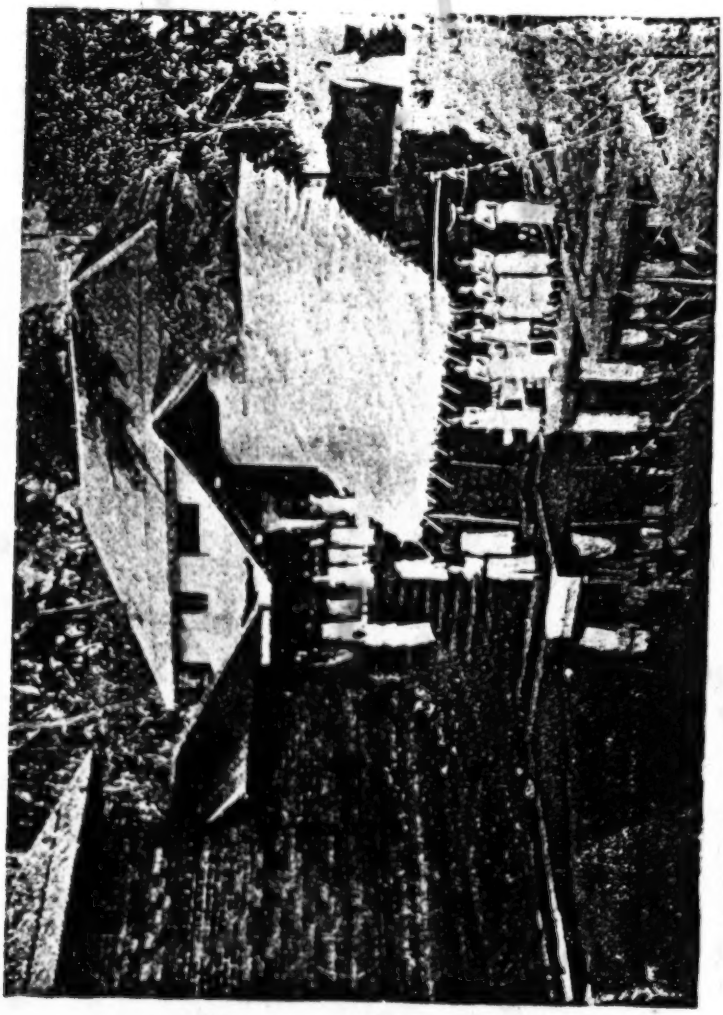

A NAYAR HOME, PANUR, N. MALABAR. THE BATHING TANK AND BATHING SHED IN THE FOREGROUND.

[Facing p. 262]

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"Immediately the day dawns the heads of the families give to almost all the junior members and servants of the household and to wives and children, money-presents varying from 4 as. to a rupee or two. Children preserve these presents to serve as their pocket money. In the more numerically large families similar presents are also made by the heads of particular branches of the same family to their juniors, children, wives and servants. These presents are intended to be the forerunners of incomes to them more splendid all the year round.

"But one other item connected with the festival deserves mention. On the evening of the previous day, about four or five o'clock most well-to-do families distribute paddy or rice, as the case may be, in varying quantities with some other accessories to the family-workmen, whether they live on the family-estates or not. In return for this, these labourers bring with them for presentation the fruits of their own labours such as vegetables of divers sorts, cocoanut oil, jaggery, plantains, pumpkins, cucumbers, brinjals, &c., in ways such as their respective circumstances might permit.

"With the close of the noon-meal the festival practically concludes, and nothing remains of it for the next day or for the same evening, for that matter. In some families after the noon-meals are over, dancing and games of various kinds are carried on, which contribute to the enhancement of the pleasantries incidental to the festival. As on other prominent occasions, card-playing and other games are also resorted to."

"THE THIRUVATHIRA FESTIVAL.

"Thiruvathira is one of the three great national occasions of Malabar. It generally comes off in the Malayalam month of Dhanu (December or January) on the day called the Thiruvathira day. It is essentially a festival in which females are almost exclusively concerned and lasts for but a single day. The popular conception of it is that it is in commemoration of the death of Kamadevan, the Cupid of our national mythology. As recorded in the old Puranas, Kamadevan was destroyed in the burning fire of the third eye of Siva, one of the chief members of our Divine Trinity. Hence he is now supposed as having only an ideal or rather spiritual existence, and thus he exerts a powerful influence upon the lower passions of human nature. The memory of this unhappy tragedy is still kept alive amongst us, particularly the female section, by means of the annual celebration of this important festival. About a week before the day, the festival practically opens. At about 4 in the morning every young female member of Nair families with pretensions to decency, gets out of her bed and takes her bath in a tank. Usually, a fairly large number of these young ladies collect themselves in

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796 the tank for the purpose. Then all or almost all of these plunge
533 in the water and begin to take part in the singing that is pre-
[515] sently to follow. One of these then leads off by means of a peculiar rhythmic song chiefly pertaining to Cupid. This singing is simultaneously accompanied by a curious sound produced with her hand on the water. The palm of the left hand is closed and kept immediately underneath the surface of the water. Then the palm of the other is forcibly brought down in a slanting direction and struck against its surface. So that the water is completely ruffled and is splashed in all directions producing a loud deep noise. This process is continuously prolonged together with the singing. One stanza is now over along with the sound and then the leader stops a while for the others to follow her in her wake. This being likewise over, she caps her first stanza, with another at the same time beating on the water and so on until the conclusion of the song. Then all of them make a long pause and then begin another. The process goes on until the peep of dawn when they rub themselves dry and come home to dress themselves in the neatest and grandest possible attire. They also darken the fringes of their eyelids with a sticky preparation of soot mixed up with a little oil or ghee; and sometimes with a superficial coating of antimony powder. They also wear white, black, or red marks lower down the middle of their foreheads close to the part where the two eyebrows near one another. They also chew betel and thus redden their mouths
[526] and lips. Then they proceed to the enjoyment of another prominent item of pleasure, viz., swinging to and fro, on what is usually known as an Uzhinjal.*

796 "On the festival day after the morning bath is over, they
264 take a light meal and in the noon the family-dinner is voraciously
262 attacked; the essential and almost universal ingredients of which being ordinary ripe plantain fruits and a delicious preparation
[535] of arrow-root powder purified and mixed with jaggery or sugar and also cocoanut. Then till evening dancing and merry-making are ceaselessly indulged in.

796 "The husband population are inexcusably required to be
[586] present in the wives' houses before evening as they are bound to do on the Onam and Vishu occasions; failure to do which is looked upon as a step or rather the first step on the part of the defaulting husband towards a final separation or divorce from the
[132] wife. Despite the rigour of the bleak December season during
[515] which commonly the festival falls, heightened inevitably by the constant blowing of the cold east wind upon their moistened frames, these lusty maidens derive considerable pleasure from their early baths and their frolics in water. The biting cold of

* A swing made of bamboo.

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the season which makes their persons shiver and quiver like aspen-leaves before the breeze, becomes to them in the midst of all their ecstatic frolics an additional source of pleasure. In short, all these merely tend to brace them up to an extent the like of which they can scarcely find anywhere else.

"The two items described above, viz., the swinging process and the beating on the water, have each its own distinctive significance. The former typifies the attempt which these maidens make in order to hang themselves on these instruments and destroy their lives in consequence of the lamented demise of their sexual deity, Kamadevan. It is but natural that depth of sorrow will lead men to extreme courses of action. The beating on the water symbolizes their beating their chests in expression of their deep-felt sorrow caused by their Cupid's death. Such in brief is the description of a Nair festival which plays a conspicuous part in the social history of Malabar."

Mr. Gopal Pannikar's chapter on "Local Traditions and Superstitions" ("Malabar and its Folk") has special value, for in it he recounts existing popular belief. He tells us that to demon labourers are attributed the existence of old dilapidated wells and buildings, demons who perform Herculean tasks under orders of a chief. One day these demons having finished their task disturbed their chief when he was playing a game of chess, coming to ask for more work, so he told them to count the waves of the sea; and this is why they are still at work. He tells us why the crow has a long life and the fowl a short one, and how that the former has but one eye, rolling in a socket; how it is that the common squirrel is marked on the back by the fingers of Vishnu; and much that is of interest about the screech owl, the lizard, the crocodile, and many other things. He recalls to my mind the popular belief accounting for the unluckiness which will follow should one see the moon on the Chadûrti night, which I have heard in North Malabar. My note was somehow mislaid. It is that the big-bellied god Ganapati was once upon a time returning home in the moonlight after a repast so generous that his person was much distended, and unable to see his feet, he tripped and stumbled. He looked around to see whether any one had observed his discomfiture. There was no one but the moon. The moon laughed, whereupon he cursed the moon. Hence the belief that whoever sees the moon on that night will be unlucky, probably defamed. Mr. Gopal Panniker, a native of South Malabar, does not mention it, but in North Malabar women are scrupulously careful not to see the moon or be for a moment in the moonlight

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342 recently were thatched are now being tiled with tiles of European pattern manufactured either locally or in Mangalore.
342 In these days of comparative peace and security of life and
178 property from marauders and free-booters, the necessity for massive structures has ceased to exist, and, coupled with this, the improved notions of architecture, derived from an easy intercourse with more civilised centres, the rapid progress of education, and with it a better knowledge of, and regard for, sanitation and hygiene, have wrought remarkable changes in the construction of buildings, so that a better class of houses, well built, airy, and commodious, is displacing the old ones with their small, dark and ill-ventilated rooms.

351 As part of the surroundings of the dwellings in the same
[343] compound, there are frequently seen a cattle shed, an excavated
[312] tank for bathing purposes, often full of fish and water lilies, a
[515] well so arranged as to admit of water being drawn directly from it to the kitchen, an out-house *(matam)* for the Brahman
[574] travellers or visitors, and, lastly, a small edifice for the family
[343] deity. The gardens surrounding the houses are adorned with
[245] mango and jack trees, immense bananas, groves of cocoanut and areca palms and various kinds of flowers. Thus, in most places, their houses, which are occupied by fine types of humanity, (well made men and shapely women), are situated beneath the grateful shade of magnificent avenues of trees.

356 Four hundred years ago, a Portuguese traveller, writing
[175] on the subject, remarks upon the Nayar houses as being scrupulously clean and neat. Without any exaggeration it may be said that they are proverbially so, and the women are either naturally endowed with a taste, or are trained from early child-
352 hood, to keep the houses and everything therein neat and clean.
[556] Those of the richer and middle classes are in these days fur-
[177] nished with articles of European manufacture, and all their domestic utensils, for daily use, are made either of bell-metal, copper or brass, all well cleaned and washed early every morning.

415 The furniture of the poorer classes is very simple; a metal
352 pot with a spout, a few metal plates and saucers, a few metal
412 pans of different sizes, a spitoon of brass, a few mats, a knife,
184 a cot or two, a betel box, and a few wooden bins for grains, are nearly all the requirements of a household in this respect.

342 The house itself is called by several names according to
564 the occupant's caste, that of an ordinary Nayar being a *veedu*

613 592 [842] deliberately refused to be a father and deprived himself of the sweet cares involved by the rearing of the children, they were indignant with a girl who refused to be a mother, and those who had not reproduced their species were considered to be subject to 613 terrible punishments in the next world. The old order of things 592 has given place to the new. Many of the old time-honoured 178 customs have already disappeared or begun to disappear. The senior woman is no longer the head of the family, and she has given place to the eldest male member who is known as *kāranavan*. 592 In a joint family which contains a large or fairly a large num- 613 ber of females and males, the former with their children occupy the main building or buildings and the latter live apart in another edifice close to and separated from them. Each of the married women has a room or two; and here her husband visits her. The old women and others occupy the common [851] portion of the house. The boys under age live with their mother under whose care they always are, and the father as a casual visitor does not generally concern himself with the [591] rearing of children. These, after coming of age, join the the adult members, and if they can afford it, live in houses of their own with their wives and children. Where the domestic environments are favourable and the influence of the *kāranavan* (as the father in a patriarchal family) and other senior member prevails, the junior members seldom go wrong. In some cases where such influences do not exist, their conduct 592 is not always satisfactory. The habits of the members are 613 generally regular, and the usual time of rising throughout the 512 year is early dawn. After rising, the males either go to their daily routine, or wait for their morning light meal which they partake after bathing and after worshipping the deity [264] in the local temple. The women attend to their children, look to the domestic minor work, bathe and prepare the break- [515] fast. Great attention is paid to their personal cleanliness. As water is near at hand, men, women, and children take a great pleasure in bathing, which, besides being conducive to cleanliness, is also considered purificatory and curative. [264] Their substantial dinner is, as a rule, a little before midday, [574] and the rest of the day is occupied by the women and others either in the perusal of religious books or in the playing of some indoor game, while visits in the afternoon are also indulged in.

464 564 [212] The Nayars are the second in the list of the castes as regards learning, and only five per cent. of the population belong to the learned professions, but they are found in all departments of public service. The community is now availing itself largely of the benefits of modern education, and the members are fast becoming conspicuous in every walk of life. In every department of the State, in all the learned professions, they form a respectable majority, and the only people who successfully compete with them are the Brahman immigrants from the other coast. Though there are extensive landholders and substantial farmers among them, a very large majority of the caste-men are really very poor, being either petty farmers, agricultural labourers or day labourers, earning [357] wages at the rate of four to five annas a day. Even women of the poorer classes do agricultural work. Domestic servants in Hindu families are almost wholly Nayars, but none of them are artisans, weavers or potters.

264 [575] [771] Food. The Nayars seldom eat before their bath or before worshipping in the temple close at hand. Their meals are generally three in number, namely, breakfast which is taken early in the morning, a midday meal between eleven and twelve, and another between seven and eight in the evening, but this meal is generally taken by children between five and six. The breakfast usually consists of *kanji* or rice gruel with some pickles and *pappadam* (round wafers made of the meal of the kidney-bean). Coffee is becoming popular among the Nayars, and this beverage is now often taken for breakfast in well-to-do families. They do not recognize any danger in the use of it, and individuals of all ages indulge in it, so much so that it is even given to young infants. The midday meal, which is usually served between eleven and twelve o'clock, consists of boiled rice together with a few vegetable curries; and butter-milk mixed with rice is the last course.

262 264 [272] [556]

Their supper which usually consists of similar preparation is taken between seven and eight at night. The women take their food after the male members of the family. Only a minority of Nayars are strict vegetarians, though there is no prohibition against their eating meat, fish or fowl.

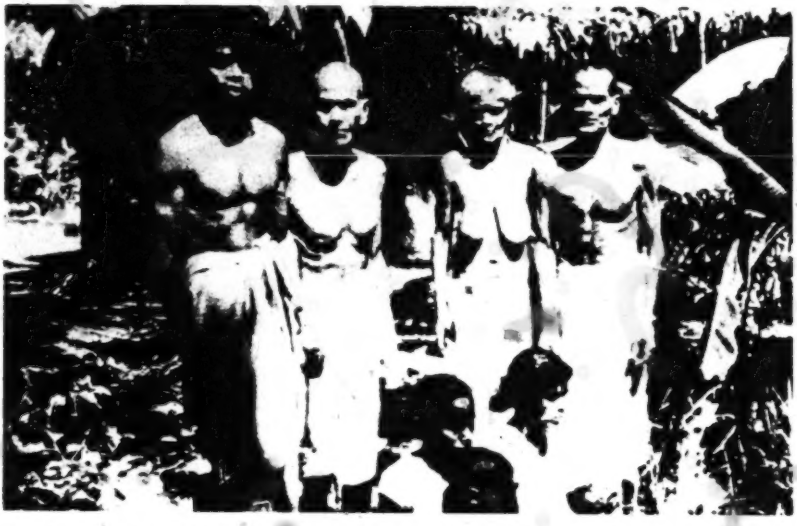
[562]

252 556 [357] In large aristocratic families, Brahman cooks are engaged to prepare the meals, but the serving is in some cases done by the members. In other families, on the contrary, the cooks of

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949)1963 A Wll Kerala A Wll
Thandans
Tiyas

515
142

Fig. 9. Thandan women bathing in the Ponani river of south Malabar, near Lakkidi, in the Walluvanad taluk.



142
291

Fig. 10. Kaladiwalapil household of Perumpillav village in north Cochin. From left to right, standing: Kandapan, Mundon, Chaki and Raman; seated in front: Lakshmi, her son and Kunyu.

[P. 238-C]

13:Thurston & Rangachari E-4, 5 (no date) 1909
AW11 Kerala AW11
Nayar

"if the Census Commissioner had enjoyed the privilege of living among the Nāyars, he would not have accused them of an 'excess of females.' The most beautiful women in India, if numerous, could never be excessive." Concerning Nāyar females, Pierre Loti writes * that "les femmes ont presque toutes les traits d'une finesse particulière. Elles se font des bandeaux a la Vierge, et, avec le reste de leurs cheveux, très noirs et très lisses, composent une espèce de galette ronde qui se porte au sommet de la tête, en avant et de côté, retombant un peu vers le front comme une petite toque cavalièrement posée, en contraste sur l'ensemble de leur personne qui demeure toujours grave et hiératique."] The Nāyars are particularly cleanly. Buchanan writes that "the higher ranks of the people of Malayala use very little clothing, but are remarkably clean in their persons. Cutaneous disorders are never observed except among slaves and the lowest orders, and the Nāyar women are remarkably careful, repeatedly washing with various saponaceous plants to keep their hair and skins from every impurity." The washerman is constantly in requisition. No dirty cloths are ever worn. When going for temple worship, the Nāyar women dress themselves in the tattu form by drawing the right corner of the hind fold of the cloth between the thighs, and fastening it at the back. The cloth is about ten cubits long and three broad, and worn in two folds. The oldest ornament of the Nāyar women is the necklace called nāgapatam, the pendants of which resemble a cobra's hood. The Nāyar women wear no ornament on the head, but decorate the hair with flowers. The nāgapatam, and several other forms of neck ornament, such as kazhultila, nalupanti, puttali,

* L'Inde (sans les Anglais).

796 In some families, after
526 the meal is over, dancing and games of various kinds
535 are carried on, which contribute to the enhancement of
[524] the pleasantries incidental to the festival. As on other prominent occasions, card-playing and other games are also resorted to."

264 On the subject of religion, Mr. Fawcett writes as
515 follows. "No Nāyar, unless one utterly degraded by the exigencies of a Government office, would eat his
782 food without having bathed and changed his cloth. It
783 is a rule seldom broken that every Nāyar goes to the
[512] temple to pray at least once a day after having bathed;
[564] generally twice a day. The mere approach anywhere near his vicinity of a Cheruman, a Pulayan, or any inferior being, even a Tiyan, as he walks to his house from the temple, cleansed in body and mind, his marks newly set on his forehead with sandal-wood paste, is pollution, and he must turn and bathe again ere he
[683] can enter his house and eat. Buchanan tells us that in his time, about a century ago, the man of inferior caste thus approaching a Nāyar would be cut down instantly
[656] with a sword; there would be no words. Now that
[671] the people of India are inconvenienced with an Arms
[178] Act which inhibits sword play of this kind, and with a law system under which high and low are rated alike, the Nāyar has to content himself with an imperious grunt-like shout for the way to be cleared for him as he stalks on imperturbed. His arrogance is not diminished, but he cannot now show it in quite the same way.

796 "I will attempt a description of the ceremonial
[773] observed at the Pishāri kāvu—the Pishāri temple near Quilandy on the coast 15 miles north of Calicut, where Bhagavati is supposed in vague legend to have slain an Āsura or gigantic ogre, in commemoration of which

31: Slater S-5 (1916-1917) 1918 AWI India
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there will be a specialist for diseases of children, an eye specialist, 759
an ordinary vaidyan who cures all common diseases, and a *mantravati* (hymn-chanter) who pretends to cure diseases by chanting certain hymns within himself, and who is believed in by the masses. There is also a *visha-vaidyan*, or expert in curing snake-bite, in some villages.

The Sub-Assistant Surgeons in charge of Government hospitals are, I am afraid, affected by red tape and carelessness born of security of employment and income.

In rural parts especially I am pained to note that their treatment is getting discredited, for the apothecaries take little pains to know the exact nature of the diseases of the poor persons who resort to the hospital and to prescribe proper medicines for the same. There are of course noble exceptions to this, but it is deplorable that there should be any irregularities at all in this most humane of all charities. The native vaidyans, on the other hand, have a local interest, their families living in the village for generations together and they are very keen to keep up their reputations; while the Government Surgeon is a bird of passage, who comes and goes, none of the villagers knowing whence or whither.

Malayalis, as a rule, are very clean, most of them bathe twice a 515 •
day; their clothes are kept neat and clean. But there is much scope for the spread of modern ideas on sanitation in very many fields. At child-birth the mother is usually kept in the worst possible room in the house. Children too might be brought up in a more sanitary environment; the education of females on these matters is a very crying necessity. It is also deplorable that Brahmans are gradually neglecting the morning-bath and exercise on which their ancestors insisted. The local Muhammadans are extremely insanitary. They are filthy, their children are filthy, their habits too are filthy.

The habit of keeping the stock very near the house should be avoided. Again except in well-to-do Nayar families kitchens are in the houses; they should be in a different building.

Among the Brahmans, a girl has to be married before the age 582
of puberty, generally 12. Among no other caste is this compulsory, [797]
though a few people, including the Indian Christians, marry their girls before puberty. These Christians are generally converts from low caste * Hindus, and change of religion has not changed their custom in this respect.

The local Muhammadans do not, as in the east of the peninsula, 562
observe purdah; their women freely talk to any person, work for others as coolies and stir abroad. Most of them are converts from low caste Hindus, and so there is no fanaticism, nor such strict observance of the rules of Islam as elsewhere. Nayar ladies are quite free, and among them descent in the female line (Marumakkattayam) prevails. Brahman ladies (not Nambudris) can go out, and be seen by others, but they are subject to their husbands and are not allowed to speak to Brahman men, and Brahman men are not allowed to speak with the women. A newly married Brahman bride is neither allowed to see nor to speak to her husband until she actually joins her husband after the nuptials. But these

* [M. L. K. Anandakrishna Ayyar, Cochin State Anthropologist, informs me that the Syrian Christians of Cochin are mainly the descendants of converts from *high* caste Hindus.—Ed.]

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for Brahmans as a whole, and the performance of *puja* during one month in a year. 476

The two elected administrators spend the money as explained above, keep the accounts, and are responsible for the whole income. This organization is seen throughout the Brahman community in Malabar. It may be regarded as a survival of the village communal organization, the political functions of which disappeared with the advent of British rule. 794

The lower classes have appointed a family to settle caste questions and questions of excommunication, adultery, etc., and this family has been exercising this power from time immemorial. The family still holds the power and the verdict which the headman of the family pronounces about such questions is tacitly accepted by all. 692

Religious festivals are performed by the temple, and the temple *in practice* belongs to the Zamorin. It is managed by the Court of Wards at the present time, along with the Zamorin's estate. The income of the temple is the offerings of the devotees who chiefly come from distant places. The festivals which the temple performs will in a year cost more than Rs. 2,000. In addition offerings to the temple from the village itself will amount to more than Rs. 3,000. 794

The above statements of indebtedness, communal income, etc., are based on careful inquiry with well-known persons and the village munsif, and are given in round numbers as accurately as possible.

Sanitary condition.—Malaria, plague, cholera, smallpox and consumption are absent from the village. 164

The ordinary diseases of the village are fever, dysentery, elephantiasis and such like diseases. Infantile mortality is high. Out of 156 deaths 87 are infant deaths. The deaths are high among the poor, particularly the Hindu poor. It may be people cannot afford to bring up their children decently. The mothers must work for the maintenance of the family before many days have passed after child-birth. I know of a Tiyya family in which seven out of eleven children born died before they were three years old. Moreover they cannot afford medical help and they implore God to help them and resort to quack doctors. The prevalence of early marriage may be cited as one of the causes for physical deterioration. But the most potent cause especially in the case of the higher classes is the ignorance of the mothers. Domestic hygiene is a sealed book for them. Their habits are not quite sanitary. [515]

There are no venomous snakes.

There is a hospital very near the village. But the chief medical help is from the native doctors who practise privately. There are two great medical experts in the native system but there are also a large number of quacks. The experts have a tremendous business but the quacks do some injury too. 759

Wearing unclean * cloths, not keeping the house neat, using the same plate for food for the whole family, are some of the insanitary habits of the poor and the lower classes. But the higher classes are very neat and Malabar is famous for its neatness. People bathe every day. 515

* [I.e., unclean according to the Malabar standard of cleanliness, which is very high. —Ed.]

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so long as they live, they have to keep their body and soul together. Thus year by year, the rich become richer and the poor poorer. The process is continuing at a fast rate and the people do not realize it. They are too ignorant and attribute everything to their fate and God's will. To add to these evils, in some years crops fail and there will be utter starvation. Thus the causes of indebtedness are— 511 426

(1) High rent.
(2) Population beyond means of subsistence.
(3) Lands limited in area.
(4) Absolute dependence on land of the population.

There is no instance of debtors who have entirely liberated themselves from debt in this desam. There is no co-operative society.

Sanitation.—In regard to sanitation, thanks to the peculiar customs of Malabar, the evils arising from the rigour of social rules are absent. Infant marriage and purdah are both absent. There is no problem of the disposal of night-soil here, for there are large unoccupied areas whither the people resort, while the women have latrines far out in their back compounds. As for insanitary habits, they are not addicted to any similar to what are found elsewhere. All bathe once a day in tanks or streams. There is neither much smoking or snuffing, but there is chewing (betel and tobacco and lime and arecanut all together) among all people, but not to such an extent as among people in Madras, etc. Drinking is a real evil among the Cherumas, but this is chiefly due to lack of proper food of other sorts. Several of them when asked why they drink have given the same unanimous answer, that "while stomach calls, one must respond, else not hear at all." The latter is of course the cheaper course. 364 [514] [515] 276 273

Good and clear water for drinking is easily got from private wells.

But with all these, the figure for the year of deaths from diseases and infant mortality is not encouraging. 165

The list contains the account of only one year that of 1915-16. But it still speaks for itself.

Kothachira.

Ages of dead.	Number according to age.	Fever.	Dysentery.	Tuberculosis.	Diarrhœa.	Dyspepsia.	Hysteria.	Karappani (skin blotched).	Other causes.
Lifeless birth	7	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Below 1 ...	9	...	3	...	...	...	4	2	...
Between 1 and 10 ...	13	4	3	1	...	...	4	1	...
„ 10 „ 20 ...	1	1	...	..	...	...	...	...	...
„ 20 „ 30 ...	7	3	..	1	1	...	...	...	2
„ 30 „ 40 ...	3	3	...	...	...	...	...	..	...
„ 40 „ 50 ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
„ 50 „ 60 ...	3	.	1	1	1	...	...	...	...
„ 60 „ 80 ...	5	...	1	1	1	...	...	...	2
Total ...	48	11	8	4	3	...	8	3	4

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556 own most of the cultivable land in the village. This family draws an income of rather more than 10,000 paras of paddy from the village, husking it in the village and using it to feed a vast household of Nambudri priests and students, and maintain a choultry. It employs a Sanskrit pandit, whose time, as the demand for Sanskrit teaching diminishes, is partly taken up with the recital to the young students of Puranic stories to which the unseen ladies of the household listen eagerly.

312 *Water-supply.*—The water-supply is abundant and is obtained from deep wells and tanks. Water from deep wells alone is used for drinking purposes. Owing to the rocky nature of the subsoil some wells are dry in summer. Each house has one or more wells; it costs about Rs. 20 to bore an ordinary deep well. The quality of well water is excellent and is an asset to the village. All people [515] bathe every day in tanks, sometimes both in the morning and evening, especially Brahmans. The villagers are personally very clean and tidy.

871 *Education.*—One elementary school, started (very recently) and managed by the philanthropic Nambudri landlord of the place, gives free instruction to boys and girls of all castes up to the fifth standard. The school has two tiled buildings, one having an area of 72 by 20 feet, inside, and a verandah of the same length which is 9 feet broad, and the other having an area of 15 by 18 feet. Both are well ventilated and well situated and have a good appearance. There is a small flower garden in front. The school is provided with the necessary furniture, maps, and pictures, and is as far as it goes one of the best equipped of such schools. It teaches reading, writing and arithmetic, music, drawing and gardening. About the practical, as distinct from the cultural value of this education, one must say (like the Scotchman) "I have my doots." There are now no less than 5 "qualified" teachers; how one wishes that "qualified" meant much more than it does mean in educational language! They are so ill-paid (Rs. 7 to 15 per month) that it is hopeless to expect more capable men to be forthcoming or to take real interest in the work of the school. As it is, I know that at least one master is interested in the work. One hundred and twenty-six boys and 42 girls, I am informed, attend the school more or less regularly. These are drawn from all classes, except the very lowest like Cherumas and Paraiyas. The vast majority however are caste Hindus—all the girls are—and come from the Nayar and Brahman families. One could wish for greater regularity in their attendance. But they complain of having work to do at home, in assisting their parents, or they are sometimes too hungry to attend school. They are as a rule too poor to buy their own books or slates and these have to be provided by the school. Numerous prizes of books, slates, etc., are given by liberal villagers and the manager every year, to encourage the pupils to persist and to attract others. The school is steadily growing.

The average duration of school life is about four years. Many 871 students leave before that period owing to the necessity of working for their livelihood.

212 About 18 per cent of the adults can read the vernacular. This